

Local Advisory Committee Minutes

12/5/11

5:30 P.M.

7:00 P.M. Hancock Group will join us

Gordon Donaldson, Nate Mason, Brett Jones, Ann McCann

No specific agenda:

- What are we planning on for the Hancock group?

We will introduce ourselves and see where they are and what their goals are.

Talk about the future, what is their thinking, moving toward a possible petition.

What might be some new formats that would take shape if we would want to form an AOS? Hancock, Beech Hill, Otis, Steuben –

Possibilities:

AOS with MDI

AOS with several others

Staying with the RSU

Explore association with Ellsworth

Innovative administrative structure

- Brett: Tuition – posted to the town – we have a certain amount that we must cover - over what we send to other schools, plus there is 10% over for MDI Each high school is assigned an approved rate by the state, RSU does not have to spend more than the state rate. D. Bridgham noted \$10,000 next year per pupil. Want to make it clear about the two charges.
- We do not have a good way to find out where all the secondary students go. In terms of budgeting, it might be nice to know. Nate noted that our numbers are going down, after this year we have several tiny classes.
- What to do about the forum in January?

Discussion re: Ellsworth movement

Discussion re: Hancock and Lamoine teachers moving to Ellsworth, or being removed and moved elsewhere.

How to get going: use the press. Jackie Weaver could come and release the time line to the newspaper. We could get out a mailing.

Explain we have talked with Hancock and that almost any structure could be formed – (with the recent legislation)

We want to say we think we should go forward, this is where we are, and this is why. We could then discuss some of the options (listed above). If we do this and get a vote along this line, perhaps we need to do some old fashion campaigning

(door to door) to get our message out. IT is hard to communicate to the community at large. (Anyone ready to fill our vacancy? “Not many beating down our door.”)

We would need to list the Pros and Cons of joining MDI or forming our own. Otis has adopted the old U92 policies – a lot smaller than the RSU’s which has been growing. Surry has been formally taken into the U93 group. Sedgwick might possibly be withdrawing from Deer Isle/ Stonington.

Brett Jones had an emergency call.

- Hancock Representatives arrived at 7:00 P.M.
Introductions: Danny Hodgkins, Diane Eckhart, Sally Bryant, Jenn Vose, Beverly Johnston, Clayton Nowell, Peter Bryant, Rich Malaby, Lana Wheeler, Sue Percanti

Gordon: talk about the history of each group and the potential for overlap.

There is discontent around school, Ernie _____ being one, saying we should form a committee of our own. We have a good group that meets. Then the LAC met with us. The more we studied it, the uglier it got. Sub committee studied finances and taxes. True trouble is lack of control. Beverly, a former teacher, stated impact of RSU on Hancock in particular, was overwhelming, staff reduction. Had good test results, when you lose all that we did, it is hard to take. We worked to have full time teachers. Bottom line is to support kids. 33 years as a teacher, not up to the standard we used to have.

Hancock formed the LAC to look at staying in RSU or to get out. Formed at the end of last year. Hancock Concerned Citizens took some of the job of the Advisory Committee.

Gordon: Small snapshot – started at the beginning as an LAC, wanted an independent committee who would make sure Lamoine got represented. Relationship with board strained from beginning in regards to tuition to MDI.

- Gordon shared the handouts and the timeline. The process to withdraw is very involved. Huge time frame. We do not need a formal plan. The petition would be to see if there is enough support for doing this or not. LAC members will meet with selectmen.
- David Bridgham and two from Hancock are meeting on Friday to go over figures gleaned from state information. They do not have individual lines, but do have an understanding of how state funds.

- Gordon: We used the old U92 budget.
Lana: Hard to believe we cannot find out how much it is costing us to be part of the RSU. Not knowing fuels the fire.

- Beverly did a survey – not collated as of yet.
Teachers do not necessarily believe they have autonomy. Programming has been adjusted in Hancock. Job security, signed on for Hancock but may be moved elsewhere. Town of Hancock supported school 100% with a strong budget (380-2). Making it equitable, we got pulled down to raise others up.

Survey a good idea

Curriculum Coordinator lot to deal with K-12. In U92 we had one person (same one) who focused on just K-8 and only 4-5 schools. Big RSU.

- Next moves: Is there merit in making a joint investigation?
 - Meet with selectmen, get them behind us and then get petition out.
Approach Otis, Steuben, and Ellsworth... maybe others.
Selectman from Mariaville approached Clayton and asked to be kept in the loop.
- Send survey out to selectmen in the surrounding towns.

Brett returned.

Strategic Planning Committee – long range planning, brainstorming ideas for the future. At one point asked if the RSU would want to change to an AOS.

RSU got bogged down in policies

Rich Malaby: reverting to a Union structure – very efficient as U92

- How many students needed? Some have been waived, current administration looking at it differently.
Collective purchasing is a benefit – cash flow issue for smaller group

Inefficiency of AOS is Supt. must attend all those meetings. Could we come up with innovative use of technology - would not need to be present physically.

If town withdraws would the RSU still be an RSU?

Property statewide, has not been transferred. There will be start-up costs, easier to approach MDI and ask if they would accept us (Lamoine).

Trenton taxes went up when teachers were put on scale.

There are active negotiations going on in RSU.

- Can we see what January plans?

- Form a sub-committee

- Lay out basic requirements of forming an AOS

- Set up steps to do planning

- Contact past school board members

- Get in touch with other towns

- Send something to all communities, need to have a hard copy of some option – combine our data and to go forward jointly with Hancock and Lamoine

Rich Malaby: Other scenarios:

- Hancock 200 Lamoine 100 - state would support 90% of that.

- Something done jointly state would have a favorable view

- Middle school separate. Have programming, do we need a new building?

- If we come up with innovative ways of doing this, we will all be better.

- Form a small committee to present what we are doing to other towns.

- As it gets bigger, it gets harder.

- Reconvene with some other towns by late January or early February.

- Gordon would agree to be a moderator/facilitator at a public forum in Hancock.

Two from Hancock, two from Lamoine will meet sometime beginning of January.

Ann McCann

Recorder